

# CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A method for governing a supply chain consortium utilizing a network,  
2 comprising the acts of:  
3 a) <sup>template</sup> ~~profiles~~ <sup>(cost, shipping, re-distribution)</sup> determining an algorithm that is acceptable to each of a plurality of  
4 distributors/suppliers;  
5 b) <sup>contract</sup> ~~members~~ <sup>sign on</sup> establishing a contract requiring a supply chain manager to manage the  
6 distributors/suppliers utilizing the algorithm;  
7 c) <sup>(0057)</sup> selecting the distributors/suppliers for operating in the supply chain utilizing the algorithm and supply chain data gathered utilizing a network; and  
8 <sup>(0075)</sup>  
9 d) allowing the supply chain manager to manage the supply chain utilizing the  
10 supply chain data.

- 1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the contract allows the supply chain manager to  
2 deviate from the algorithm a predetermined amount.

- 1 3. The method of claim 1, wherein the management of the supply chain by the  
2 <sup>(0106)</sup> supply chain manager includes tracking benchmark performance utilizing the  
3 supply chain data.

- 1 4. The method of claim 1, wherein the management of the supply chain by the  
2 <sup>(0106)</sup> supply chain manager includes monitoring adherence to the contract utilizing the  
3 supply chain data.

- 1 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the algorithm includes a least cost analysis.

- 1 6. The method of claim 5, wherein the least cost analysis involves entities selected  
2 from the group consisting of a price of product, a cost of shipping the product,  
3 and a cost of re-distribution of the product.
- 1 7. The method of claim 5, wherein the least cost analysis involves a price of product,  
2 a cost of shipping the product, and a cost of re-distribution of the product.
- 1 8. The method of claim 5, wherein the least cost analysis involves capacities of the  
2 distributors/suppliers and requirements of a plurality of outlets of the supply  
3 chain.
- 1 9. The method of claim 5, wherein the least cost analysis includes a tiered least cost  
2 analysis.
- 1 10. The method of claim 5, wherein the least cost analysis is standardized.
- 1 11. The method of claim 1, wherein the management of the supply chain by the  
2 supply chain manager includes collecting profit information utilizing the supply  
3 chain data in real-time.
- 1 12. The method of claim 1, wherein the management of the supply chain by the  
2 supply chain manager includes paying the selected distributors/suppliers rebates.
- 1 13. A system for governing a supply chain consortium utilizing a network,  
2 comprising:  
3 a) logic for determining an algorithm that is acceptable to each of a plurality of  
4 distributors/suppliers;  
5 b) logic for establishing a contract requiring a supply chain manager to manage the  
6 distributors/suppliers utilizing the algorithm;  
7 c) logic for selecting the distributors/suppliers for operating in the supply chain  
8 utilizing the algorithm and supply chain data gathered utilizing a network; and

9 d) logic for allowing the supply chain manager to manage the supply chain utilizing  
10 the supply chain data.

1 14. The system of claim 13, wherein the contract allows the supply chain manager to  
2 deviate from the algorithm a predetermined amount.

1 15. The system of claim 13, wherein the management of the supply chain by the  
2 supply chain manager includes tracking benchmark performance utilizing the  
3 supply chain data.

1 16. The system of claim 13, wherein the management of the supply chain by the  
2 supply chain manager includes monitoring adherence to the contract utilizing the  
3 supply chain data.

1 17. The system of claim 13, wherein the algorithm includes a least cost analysis.

1 18. A computer program product for governing a supply chain consortium utilizing a  
2 network, comprising:

3 a) computer code for determining an algorithm that is acceptable to each of a  
4 plurality of distributors/suppliers;

5 b) computer code for establishing a contract requiring a supply chain manager to  
6 manage the distributors/suppliers utilizing the algorithm;

7 c) computer code for selecting the distributors/suppliers for operating in the supply  
8 chain utilizing the algorithm and supply chain data gathered utilizing a network;  
9 and

10 d) computer code for allowing the supply chain manager to manage the supply chain  
11 utilizing the supply chain data.

1 19. The computer program product of claim 18, wherein the contract allows the  
2 supply chain manager to deviate from the algorithm a predetermined amount.

- 1 20. The computer program product of claim 18, wherein the management of the
- 2 supply chain by the supply chain manager includes tracking benchmark
- 3 performance utilizing the supply chain data.

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